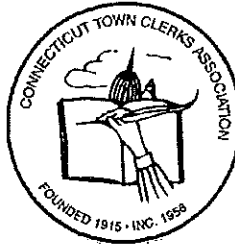


Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Inc.

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2010 Legislative Committee

Written Testimony
Friday, March 12, 2010
Government Administration and Elections Committee

Various Raised Bills: SB421, SB364, SB363, HB5442.

Good morning Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone and the distinguished members of the GAE Committee, my name is Patricia Strauss, and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association (CTCA) of which I am the legislative chair and the Town Clerk of Westport. I am here to testify on various election bills being considered today.

SB421 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTIONS:

In general, our Association supports any change to the election laws that will clarify procedures for easier implementation or will reflect actual procedures currently being used. However, there are several areas of this bill that need revision: In **section 17**, we **oppose** a \$50 fine to town clerks for not submitting a redistrict map in a timely manner and suggest any penalty, if necessary at all, be imposed on the preparer of the map itself. Clerks are not involved in the creating and the subsequent legislative approval process. Towns use several different departments to complete these maps including registrars of voters, GIS engineering managers, IT departments, rules committees, and town planners. In very few towns is this responsibility that of the town clerk.

In **Section 18**, we **oppose** the added responsibility of tallying moderator returns on election night and being fined \$50 for non-filing. This duty currently belongs to the head moderator who is hired and trained by the registrars of voters to complete the required paperwork. There is no need to compile extensive district data on election night. Currently, clerks have 21 days after a state election to send the detailed district data report to SOTS. (Sec9-322a) Please ask any election official, to confirm that election night is the end of a very long day where lack of sleep and major commotion could yield for incorrect and possibly incomplete reporting. Also, by giving this duty to either the moderator OR the town clerk, single accountability for payment of a late filing fee, if necessary, is removed.

We support sections 30 and 31 and HB5442 expanding the use of electronic means to improve the absentee ballot process especially for members of our armed forces.

SB363, AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES.

During these difficult economic times, finding cost savings should always be looked upon favorably. Reducing polling places for primaries will not jeopardize the voting process but may limit the ability to report final results by voting districts. Our association supports this bill if it will save towns money, which it should. Although, there's potential for voter confusion any time a voting location changes no matter how much notice a voter receives.

SB364, AN ACT CONCERNING POST-ELECTION AUDITS.

Counting individual ballots by hand is a tedious process. We support the use of tabulator machines using different memory cards to audit election results.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would be pleased to take any questions that you have at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia H. Strauss, Westport Town Clerk
Chair, CTCA Legislative Committee

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